

Committee(s):	Date(s):	
Streets & Walkways Sub	19 November 2012	
Subject: Cheapside Stage 4A - Gresham Street Objections Report	Public	
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Decision	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>In July 2011 Members approved that a formal assessment be undertaken to assess the suitability of opening Gresham Street to eastbound motor vehicles and improving cycling facilities. Subsequently, in April 2012, Members considered various options and approved an option (to proceed to detailed design) which would deliver this opening. This option included a raised courtesy crossing. However, a decision on the choice of the materials to be used was deferred to allow a review of materials to take place. This review is being undertaken and is yet to be considered by Members.</p> <p>A public consultation was conducted in January 2012 to which there was strong support for the two-way operation and cycling improvements.</p> <p>As part of the evaluation and assessment, an experimental opening of Gresham Street to eastbound motor vehicles was implemented. As a result of this, three formal objections have been received.</p> <p>Officers have now reviewed these objections and believe that they have been or will be adequately mitigated through careful and considered design of the option approved already by Members.</p> <p>Officers have also assessed the experimental opening and conclude that whilst the opening has had some negative impacts, which is largely expected due to its temporary nature, the improved access is considered to be of greater value to the wider community.</p> <p>Members are therefore asked to consider the objections and decide whether or not the experimental measures currently in place at Gresham Street should be made permanent.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>I recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members agree to the making of Traffic Orders under section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, so as to make the two-way operation at the Gresham Street junction with Aldersgate Street permanent. • The objectors are informed of your decision. 		

Main Report

Background

1. Gresham Street was closed to east-bound traffic in 1993 as part of the City's original Traffic and Environmental Zone (security zone). The zone was extended in 1996 to cover a larger part of the City. The legacy arrangements remain but no longer serve the original intended purpose. The arrangement however has

provided a level of environmental benefits, such as perceived road safety benefits and lower traffic volumes, to local road users and occupiers.

2. In June 2010, Gresham Street was re-opened to eastbound traffic to facilitate works along Cheapside and the surrounding areas. The temporary arrangement made it opportune to assess the two-way functionality and consider whether or not it should be made permanent.
3. In July 2011 Members approved that a formal assessment be undertaken to assess the suitability of opening Gresham Street to eastbound motor vehicles and improved cycling facilities. Subsequently, in April 2012, Members considered various options and approved an option (to proceed to detailed design) which would deliver this opening with the success criteria detailed below. This option included a raised courtesy crossing. However, decision on the choice of the materials to be used was deferred to allow a review of materials to take place. This review is being undertaken and is yet to be considered by Members.

Success criteria:

- Improved motor vehicle accessibility for local occupiers;
 - Improved highway network resilience;
 - Improved cycling accessibility, convenience and safety;
 - Usability for pedestrians;
 - Minimise the impacts of increased traffic using Gresham Street; and
 - Minimise impact upon safety in general.
4. In January 2012, a public consultation was undertaken. The results were presented to Members in April 2012. In Summary, the majority of respondents (some 80%) supported the implementation of permanent two-way functionality as well as improvements to cycling facilities.
 5. In February 2012 an experimental scheme, under S.9 of the Traffic Regulation Act 1984, to open Gresham Street to two-way motor traffic was implemented in order to review the actual two-way operation, albeit in a temporary layout, as opposed to a theoretical analysis. As part of this process, three formal objections have been received.

Objections

6. Since the beginning of the experimental scheme two formal objections have been received. One from Mr P Betteridge (representing Schroder Investment Management Ltd, 31 Gresham Street) and one from Mr R Smyth (an individual objector), Officers are also treating the comments made by Mr D William who represents the Cyclists in the City group as a third objection. These objections are summarised below but are appended in Appendix A.

Schroder's Objection

“Although we acknowledge that two-way traffic improves accessibility, we believe that it is at the expense of pedestrian convenience and safety.”

“Most of our staff in Gresham Street and nearby satellite offices have to cross Gresham Street more than once a day. This has become far more difficult and hazardous experience during busy traffic periods since the road was re-opened to two-way traffic.”

Mr R Smyth’s Objection

“I am writing to object to the proposed experimental traffic order enabling motor vehicles to enter the western end of Gresham Street but to support the proposal to increase permeability for pedal cycles.”

“This would degrade conditions for the increased number of people on foot or on cycle in Gresham Street”

“This is a narrow street with a historic setting that already has too much motor traffic during the day and does not function well.”

“It goes against the principles and policies of the Local Implementation Plan.”

“The City should at most make the turn into Gresham Street no motor vehicles 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, reducing rat-running when most people are there on foot and on cycle but allowing access.”

Cyclists in the City Comments/objection

“We welcome the fact that the City will enable this route to be opened to cyclists by opening up the link into Gresham Street.”

“We are concerned that the route should be clearly signposted so that cyclists can find their way on and off the shared space and so that pedestrians are aware cyclists are allowed there.”

“Overall, we’re not fans of shared space. We don’t think it’s good for cyclists or pedestrians.”

“The opening of Gresham Street to two-way traffic will turn it into a rat-run, making it less pleasant and potentially much less desirable as a route for cyclists and is in contravention of the City’s Local Implementation Plan.”

Considerations and assessment

7. All objections received have been examined and considered by officers. The key issues are discussed below.

Safety

8. The concerns raised regarding the safety of pedestrians at Gresham Street, particularly at the junction of Gresham Street/Aldersgate Street have been carefully considered.

9. The experimental measures currently in place mean vehicles entering Gresham Street from Aldersgate Street are driving on a temporary unfinished or unclearly defined surface. There is limited distinction between footway and carriageway and temporary street furniture adds to confusion between highway users. This negatively impacts upon a pedestrian's perception of safety and likely contributes to the concerns of some individuals.
10. Speed surveys show that 85% of the vehicles travelling along Aldersgate Street do not exceed 25mph between 7am and 7pm on weekdays. On Gresham Street itself this is down to 20mph. Officers have also observed that turning speeds are relatively low. Speed is therefore not considered significant.
11. In the option approved by Members, a raised courtesy crossing will be installed. This will minimise vehicle entry speeds and indicate to motorists that they are entering an area with a different characteristic to Aldersgate Street and, in visual terms, formalises the space as a pedestrian crossing point. Although, what finish will be applied to the raised crossing is still to be agreed by Members, a form of visual and/or tactile finish will be applied, thereby further mitigating the concerns. The radius of the turn for vehicles entering Gresham Street from Aldersgate Street will also be designed to prevent excessive vehicle speeds and maximise visibility.
12. Observations and traffic flow data (considered in more detail below) have shown that there are frequent gaps in the traffic flow to enable pedestrians to cross without undue delay. However, refuges and carriageway markings will also be considered (at the detailed design stage) at the junction as well as the entire stretch of the street should members agree to the two-way operation of Gresham Street being made permanent.
13. Injury collision data for Gresham Street has been analysed and is summarised in the table below.

Location	Average annual collisions - Before opening between May 2007 – May 2010 (those involved e/b motor vehicles)	Average annual collisions – after opening between June 2010 – 2012 (those involved e/b motor vehicles)
At the Gresham Street/Aldersgate Street junction	1	1
Gresham Street (Foster Lane - King Street)	2 (0.33)	2.5 (1.5)
Gresham Street (east of King Street – Moorgate)	1.7 (0.33)	3 (0.5)
Total (of which involve eastbound motor traffic)	4.7 (0.7)	6.5 (2)

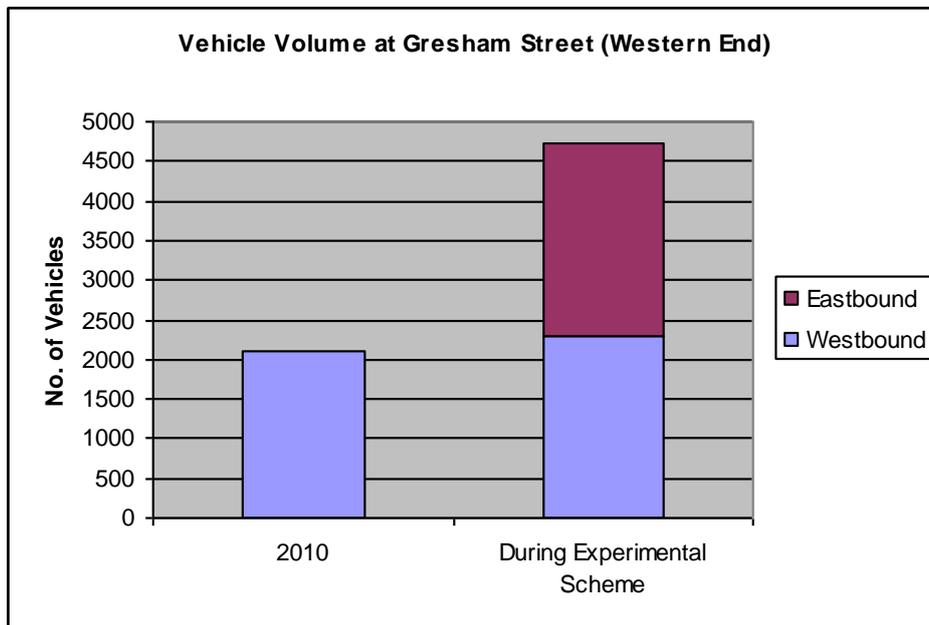
14. From the above table, it can be seen that at the Gresham Street/Aldersgate Street junction, there has been no increases in collisions since the eastbound opening. However, the remainder of Gresham Street including some of Lothbury has seen a slight increase in collisions. This net increase can largely be attributed to eastbound traffic, but not necessarily to the opening. It is however acknowledged and accepted that there is a clear correlation between traffic flow and collision rate – the greater the traffic flow, the higher the collision rate will generally be. It is also accepted that the increase in traffic using Gresham Street is likely to result in an equal reduction of traffic in other city streets, most notably Cheapside. This reduction is therefore likely to lead to a reduction in collisions occurring there and therefore an overall neutral impact on road safety is envisaged.
15. As part of the analysis, officers also investigated 8 other junctions in the City which have some similarities to the Gresham Street/Aldersgate Street junction. It has been found that for a junction of this type, an average annual collision rate of 1.6 can be expected. Therefore the Gresham Street/Aldersgate Street junction will perform better than this average.

Shared Space

16. As part of the experimental scheme, a shared space (between pedal cyclists and pedestrians) on the western side of the Aldersgate Street footpath was implemented to enable cyclists to access the Gresham Street from Angle Street. This provides significant journey time savings and cyclists can avoid the heavily trafficked roundabout at the Museum of London. Shared space is considered appropriate at this location because the footway is very wide and pedestrian flows are relatively low. The comments made on appropriate signage to ensure proper awareness by cyclists and pedestrians are noted. It is likely that in addition to compliant signage, additional cycle markings will be placed to further communicate the presence of the cycle route.
17. It can be argued that disabled users of the shared space may be negatively impacted upon; however it is considered that this issue could be mitigated through well considered signage and markings. Usage of the street is comparatively low relative to the popularity of the route amongst cyclists. 500 cyclists on average utilise the route daily between 7am to 7pm on weekdays.
18. In the City, shared space is now used in preference to other measures such as separate or segregated cycle lanes. Segregated measures were found to encourage excessive cycle speed and, in the City lead to cyclists and pedestrians being less considerate towards one another.

Traffic Flows

19. The graph below compares historical vehicular traffic volume data with data obtained recently during the experimental scheme. Note this data is representative of traffic at the western end of Gresham Street by its junction with Aldersgate Street.



20. The graph shows vehicular traffic volumes at Gresham Street for weekdays between 7am and 7pm. It demonstrates that adding two-way functionality effectively doubles the number of vehicles using the western end of Gresham Street. These additional vehicles add to the existing eastbound flow further down the street. This equates to approximately 8 vehicles every minute, eastbound and westbound combined, in the morning and evening peak periods in the vicinity of Gresham Street/Aldersgate Street junction.
21. Traffic surveys have also shown that with the implementation of the experimental scheme, Gresham Street is being used by both through traffic (rat running) and local access traffic.
22. There is an equal split of through traffic and local traffic, with 50% of vehicles entering Gresham Street doing so to make a local trip. The other 50% of vehicular traffic is through traffic and it is estimated that providing the two-way functionality at Gresham Street has resulted in an additional 1,200 vehicles per day (between 7am – 7pm on weekdays) to pass through Gresham Street en-route to a non-local destination.
23. It should be noted that this traffic would most likely be travelling through the City via another street (mostly Cheapside) if it wasn't utilising Gresham Street. Therefore it's very unlikely that this through traffic represents a net increase of vehicular traffic using the City's Local Highway Network.
24. Cheapside, as with Gresham Street is also a local access road, and with the most recent data in June 2010 (just prior to the opening of Gresham Street), it was used by over 5,500 vehicles per day (7am – 7pm both directions). As mentioned in the above paragraph, some of the traffic that used Cheapside has likely been transferred to Gresham Street.
25. Other notable local access streets have far higher traffic flows. For example Leadenhall Street experiences traffic volumes of almost double that of Gresham Street during and morning and evening peaks. Ludgate Hill also experiences flows far greater than Gresham Street, with almost double the amount of traffic during busy periods.

26. A timed restriction to mitigate against the impact of through traffic was considered. In reviewing the survey data, it was found that the majority of through traffic using Gresham Street was between 7am to 7pm. This is also the period where most pedestrians and cyclists will be using the street. A timed closure of this period would therefore be an appropriate consideration. However, this is also the period when the majority of local access traffic uses Gresham Street and introducing such a restriction would therefore not improve access for local occupiers nor deliver the other successes of the project. Therefore it is not recommended.

Local Implementation Plan

27. The City of London Local Implementation Plan 2011 is the City of London's approved plan setting out its proposals for the implementation of the Mayor of London's transport strategy in the City.
28. The opening of Gresham Street and improved cycling provisions would support a number of LIP objectives in particular, "to increase permeability, connectivity and accessibility; and to smooth traffic flow and reduce journey-time variability and traffic congestion" Full account of the other objectives have also been taken into consideration.
29. The LIP also encourages "the continued creation of more pedestrian and cyclist shared routes and more pedestrian zones that permit access for cyclists, i.e. the selective exclusion of motor vehicles from some local access streets, at all times or only at some times of day"
30. It is considered that the proposals here, to improve accessibility for local occupiers and improved cycling provisions are of more value to the wider community than the selective exclusion of motor vehicles. Furthermore, it is considered more appropriate to introduce the selective exclusion of motor vehicles in more minor streets or at other locations where there is a clear and identified need.

Financial Implications

31. Should Members opt to re-instate the junction to a one-way operation, the estimated cost is £11,500.
32. The cost of proceeding and making the experimental measures permanent will be presented with detailed design in the Gateway 4c/5 report.

Conclusion

33. Following the public consultation in January 2012 and the experimental scheme, the desire of the majority of stakeholders is to see Gresham Street opened to two-way traffic permanently and for improvements to cycling facilities to be implemented. Officers believe that the objections raised some relevant issues but that largely these issues have already been or will have been adequately mitigated through careful and considered design. The issue regarding the LIP policy of selective exclusion of motor vehicles, whilst relevant, it's considered improving access to this area is of a greater value to the wider community and would achieve the success criteria as set out earlier in this report. It is therefore recommended that Members note the objections but agree to the making of Traffic Orders under section

6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, so as to make the two-way operation at the Gresham Street junction with Aldersgate Street permanent, subject to Members approval of the detailed design (Gateway 4c/5) of the approved option.

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Appendix A